INTERVIEWS by Scott Sinclair
We like to ask performers a set of questions about
their sound work via email so punters can get an idea of what the
performers are all about at the event. These will be published in the website.
In light of Adam's tape cutups, Machina's pop interpretations, and the nostalgia aroused
by Bernard's recent visit, I thought I'd theme the questions around appropriation and
creating new sound materials from old ones...

In what ways do you appropriate previously recorded music?

Machina Aux Rock: The Machina Aux Rock process is more accurately described as quotation than appropriation in that we don't reuse anyone elses actual recordings.

Having said that, we do deliberately use iconic and generic drum beats and guitar sounds, and we intend these to be clearly recognisable.   In other words if you are thinking "Hey, they're ripping off the beat to Iggy Pop's 'Lust For Life'!!" then we have succeeded. In this way we are purposefully following a rock tradition of aping or trying to recreate music and sound that is not of our place and time. ie., the Rolling Stones (white Brits born in the 40s) trying to make blues like Muddy Waters etc. (black Americans born at the turn of the 20th century). The fact that the Stones failed to do this and instead created a sound unique to them and their time and place, is also part of the tradition we are appropriating. Krautrock, Germans trying to rock like the Americans in the early seventies and failing beautifully, is another example.

Camilla Hannan: I suppose I should probably say that I dont use appropriated material in my work. All recordings are from location that I've personally done.
Maybe you could say that I appropriate locations through recording them.
And by manipulating those recordings I am turning them into something
very different from the source. For example: a manipulated source
recording of a chlorine soaked innercity swimming pool becomes a
Carribean beach break lapping at your toes as you sit on Kingston beach
drinking pina coladas.
In earlier work I have used the odd sample such as the bass riff from
Sly and Family Stone's 'Thank You for letting be be myself" or a couple of seconds of
Tito Puente. And then it was only minimal grabs and fucked
with. And it was more as a reference to be used within compositional
ideas. Or as in the case of Sly because it's such a freaky fat bass line
and everybody needs a little fat freaky bass in their life, even
experimental musicians.

How far do you have to take what you've appropriated before you consider it your own work?

Camilla Hannan: It's really never your own work if it was created by someone else, but that's OK. Music shouldnt be about western capitalist ideas of ownership.

Machina Aux Rock: About 3 feet. Give or take a few inches.

Do you appropriate past musical ideas that you are personally fond of, or do you prefer to "make good out of bad"?

Machina Aux Rock: Obviously we like rock music. So, to appropriate a phrase we've been hearing a lot in Brisbane - it's all good! But we try to limit our sources to the really iconic and seminal moments in rock which are also generally popular and familiar. This is in order for the references to be recognisable, but also to play with the dislocation of sounds from another time and place. For example our track 'Speed (When The Meter Breaks) found on the Liquid Architecture 4 compilation, is based upon, among other things, Led Zeppelin's 'When The Levee Breaks' from 1971. This is an interesting moment in rock firstly because it has some of the first really big heavy drum sounds that then influenced countless hard rockers for decades to come, and secondly because the song was sampled by the Beastie Boys to provide the drum sounds for 'Rhymin' and Stealin' the opening track on Licensed To Ill (1988) - yet another example of white boys trying to be black, failing but creating something of their own.